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571 643 function and authority was largely evolved and built up during the Ngoni migration across the Zambesi and the early settlement in Nyasaland.

643 The office of the Paramount was supported by three typical Ngoni institutions. The first was the regency exercised by the man who was held responsible for the care of the office of the Paramount. He was called 'the one who takes care of the country', 'the one who has to put the new *inkosi* in his place', 'the one who takes care of the young *inkosi* until he enters his father's place'. We shall see later how this principle of regency operated in particular cases in the succession to the Paramountcy. It proved to be an effective provision both in the case of a minor who was recognized as his father's heir, and during an interregnum while the succession was being discussed. The Ngoni showed a clear understanding of what functions the regent ought to perform, and when he exceeded these functions and usurped, or tried to usurp, the Paramount's position they condemned his action as wrong.

The second institution which supported the Paramountcy was the 'big house' from which the heir to the Paramount had to come. We shall see later that it was not always considered essential that the heir should be the actual child of the wife in the big house. A boy could be adopted 597 into the house and, by Ngoni kinship rules, he was then a child of that house and of the woman in it.

643 The third institution, which made the Paramount immortal at death 769 after having been supreme in his life-time, was the Ngoni practice of 'guarding his spirit' in a hut, usually in the village where he had lived. The guardianship of a spirit was not practised exclusively for the Paramount. All the chiefs and the heads of the Swazi clans had this provision made for their spirits when they died, but in national crises prayers 282 addressed to the spirits of former Paramounts were of supreme importance.

The royal clan and the big house

643 Among the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans which formed the Ngoni 614 aristocracy the royal clan had a unique position. Not only was it the clan 565 of the Paramount, but its members had social rank and prestige because 184 they belonged to his clan. In the northern kingdom informants showed awareness of the fact that their royal clan of Jere was not one of the well-known clans in the south. Other clan names found among them, such as Ngomezulu, Thole, Nzima, Nqumayo, and many more, were known to be clan names among the South-eastern Bantu. The following explanation was given by Cibambo about the name Jere and was the one most widely accepted:

> The Ngoni themselves say that the clan name of Jere was given during the journey, and that it arose out of the number of people who were with Zwangendaba. When the Ngoni want to speak of a large number of people they use two well-known words which are: '*Ngu Shaka*' (it is Shaka);

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As one of the Ngoni said: 'The spirits of the dead Paramounts were the guardians of the whole nation. These *amadlozi* stood between UMkulumqango and the people. They were never worshipped at times of plenty and prosperity, but at the time of crisis and danger.'

In pre-European days there had been two special occasions when the spirits of former Paramounts were addressed on behalf on the whole nation. One was at the time of the *incwala* or first-fruits ceremony, which as we have seen was given up before the final settlement in Nyasaland. This was an occasion uniting all the people with songs and dances at the village of the Paramount. The second occasion was in time of war before the army went out on a raid. This could take place more than once during the fighting season, and always at the Paramount's village.

The remaining occasions for addressing the spirits of former Paramounts on behalf of the nation were when epidemics threatened, when there was a drought, or in the serious illness of the Paramount or of a leading member of his family. In prayer for rain or for the recovery from illness of someone of the royal clan, the diviner had to be consulted about which of the ancestors of the Paramount should be addressed. The ancestor indicated by the diviner had to be named in the ritual, his genealogy given and, as a rule, his particular attributes and his praise-names mentioned. The following account was given to me by Mlonyeni Jere, who prayed for rain in Elangeni in 1935:

¶ When the rain stopped, the *amadoda* spoke among themselves 'What shall be done?' If they could not find out who had made the rain to stop, they said 'We must ask the *isanusi* (diviner). Perhaps it is one of the *amadlozi* (spirits) who are stopping the rain.'

If the *isanusi* finds it is the spirit of Hlacwayo, then all the big people are called to come to the kraal at Elangeni. Then they say 'We should choose a black ox with no white spot and bring it to the kraal.' They appointed a speaker who knows how to speak well all the names of the chiefs who have died. This man says to the spirit 'This cow is yours. You must eat it all. Then you must tell UMkulumqango our troubles.' If it urinates or makes dung, the spirits agree. This praying to the spirits is in the kraal in the evening. At early dawn next day someone is sent to kill the ox. While it was being flayed, the huts of the chief wives were smeared with cow dung on the floors and on the place outside the door. The meat was cooked in the kraal by the *amadoda*. Some of it was taken into the *indlunkulu* and kept there for one night so that the spirit might lick it.

The Paramount had already eaten in the kraal and the meat was divided for the *amadoda* according to their age regiments. After they have eaten, a big man rises up to thank the spirit with his titles and praise-names, and all the people answer *Bayete* and there is a war-dance in the kraal. Then they look up and see clouds coming. Then the rain comes.

This particularizing of the appeal to an individual dead Paramount in the ancestor cult was an essential element in the ritual, and there seemed

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The ritual of the purification of the living

The living had certain rites to carry out on their own behalf which, if omitted, would bring the displeasure of the ancestors upon them. These were essentially purification rites for they removed the defilement of death from each individual who was closely related to, or had performed some office for, the dead; and through the rites the houses and utensils were cleansed, and the living community was re-integrated after the loss of one of its members. Shaving, burning the hair and mourning bands, and washing in a stream, were the prescribed acts for all who were connected by kinship or marriage with the deceased, or who had taken part in preparing the body or digging the grave. These were a succession of rites as we have seen, and emphasized the need for ritual cleansing over a long period, and for renewed integration between the living.

In addition to this generally practised ritual, there were some acts of ritual purification of houses and utensils found only among the Swazi clans. One informant told of the ritual washing of hoes used to dig the grave in the blood of a newly killed sheep. Several others spoke of the cleansing with sheep dung of the huts of the widows of a dead man at the time of the second shaving. On each occasion when meat was offered to the ancestors after a death, the living who ate the meat had to be made ceremonially clean through the act of shaving, followed by ritual washing at the river.

The ritual of addressing the spirits

There was no set formula for addressing the ancestral spirits but there were three parts in all the prayers which I heard and which were recited to me. The first was the naming of the ancestors. The leading clans in the two kingdoms demonstrated the way in which they prayed to their ancestors by repeating the names of successive heads of the clan. They began with the name of the ancestor who had died in Swaziland and those of his father and grandfather and other forbears if known. The Nhlane clan, for example, told me 'We pray: *UNdina ka UNchaba ka UMulawu ka UMazongolo*' and then added: 'UNdina died in our village of Hoho before we left Swaziland and he was buried in the kraal in Hoho.' The Mhlambi clan in central Ngoniland named their ancestor UNgekwazi who died in Swaziland, but they did not know any names before him. Other clans in the central kingdom used the name of their ancestor who crossed the Zambesi with Mputa. The most important element in the prayer, therefore, was the naming of the 'big spirit', sometimes coupled with more remote ancestors.

The second element in addressing the spirits was to call their attention to the beast which was to be offered to them if they 'agreed'. 'Here is your beast' was the formula. Although three or four beasts or even

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769 782 more were driven out of the kraal before the invocation of the spirits, one had been selected for the sacrifice, and the spirits' attention was drawn to this animal. They were reminded that it was their beast because it belonged to the herd of the house which guarded their spirits, and it was also their beast because it was to be killed and its meat offered to them if they showed agreement.

The third part of the prayer was mentioning the needs of the person on whose behalf the spirits were being addressed. The following words were used by Lopati Nzunga when he spoke this prayer to the spirits when Bambo Manga was ill:

769 539 782

O thou Gumede!
O thou Mputa!
O thou great chief!
Here is your beast.
That your child may be healed,
Look on what is yours.
May you remain well
And your child recover.
We do not know,
We do not know.
If you say that she will die,
She is yours, this child of yours.
It is your affair.
As for us, we long that your child may recover.
If she dies, this child of yours,
We can only speak your names.
We cry to you for her.

769 782 Bambo Manga was there and her daughter and Chief Njolomole, and while Lopati Nzunga addressed the spirits, the rest murmured the names '*Wena Gumede*', '*Wena Mputa*', and added '*Mntwanayako*' (your child), '*Inkomoyako*' (your beast). The form of the prayer varied, and might be a sequence of address and petition as in this one, or a series of ejaculations with little consecutive thought. It depended on the eloquence and skill of the speaker of the prayer, and that form of eloquence was a well-recognized characteristic among the Ngoni. In the central kingdom before the Europeans came, the head of the Phungwako clan had addressed the spirits of the Maseko Paramounts. Since the Phungwako chiefs had separated from Gomani's kingdom, the Nzunga clan performed this ritual for Bambo Manga in their head village. In addition to speaking the prayer, the same man had to see that all was done in order, the cattle driven out, the chief people assembled, and the subsequent action taken in accordance with the sign given by the spirits, either to kill a beast for sacrifice, or to find out from the diviners why the spirits had failed to agree. When the spirits 'refused' the first time Lopati Nzunga addressed them, he concluded the proceedings by gently

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reminding the spirits that all depended on them. There was no tone of scolding in the words but a respectful plea for attention and help.

> Alas O Paramount,
> Alas O Father,
> Why do you refuse us?
> What do you say about your child?
> We say we are your people,
> Alas O Paramount.

In prayers for rain the same form of address was used with the three parts of the prayer. The ancestral spirits addressed were those of the line of the Paramounts, since the needs of the whole country were involved. The beast chosen for the offering to the spirits was a black one with no white markings, and in place of the sick person's name, the need for rain was mentioned. In the account given by Mlonyeni Jere (quoted in the first chapter of Part IV) he used this formula, mentioning the names, presenting the cow, and then asking the ancestral spirits to tell UMkulumqango how greatly they were troubled through lack of rain.

The ritual of sacrificing to the spirits

The essential equipment in the ritual of sacrificing was the spear with which the beast was killed; baskets, both the wide winnowing basket (*lichero*) and the food basket (*nsengwa*); the wooden dish (*ngcwembe*) on which the meat was placed; and the gourd cups for beer. These have been mentioned already in several contexts as the sacrificial vessels or ritual objects connected with the ancestor cult and kept in the hut of the woman who was guardian of a particular ancestral spirit. In the northern kingdom one of the Nhlane clan who carried out the ritual for sacrifices to UNdina Nhlane at Hoho said that in the hut of UNtani Nzima who died in Swaziland, but whose house had continued, was a spear, a black cloth for rain-making and a wooden meat dish. These were kept on the right-hand side at the back of the hut, and no one passing by could stand erect; he had to bend his back and head 'as men do when passing the *inkosi*'. Since the coming of the missions these had been thrown away.

In the central kingdom I saw in several houses this collection of ritual vessels. There was always a spear, a food basket, one or more gourds for beer, and one or more of the wide, flat, winnowing baskets on which uncooked flour was carried and which was used for meat if there was no wooden dish. These were kept at the back of the hut hanging on the wall, above the place where sacrificial meat was laid.

The first stage of the ritual sacrifice was killing and flaying the beast. It was killed either in the kraal or just outside the fence, with a thrust from the spear, or more than one if necessary, by some member of the leading clan. At the time of the sacrifice when Bambo Manga was ill

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the killing and the flaying were done just outside the kraal by young men of the Nzunga clan, younger brothers of the chief. The cow ran backward as she was stabbed and a second blow killed her, and she was dragged round when she fell to lie with her head to the south-east. Some of the blood from the wound was collected immediately by Lopati and taken by him and put in Bambo Manga's hut in 'the place of the spirits'. The cow was skinned with a few neat strokes of the knife, and a thin strip of meat about six inches wide was cut from the back. This Lopati put in the sacrificial food basket and he and the chief went with it to Bambo Manga's house. The three firestones were removed and the meat was spread on the glowing logs till it was cooked through and quite white. Bambo Manga, who was lying on her mat, washed her hands and face with water brought by her daughter and rinsed out her mouth. Two small pieces of the meat were given to her to eat, and the rest was cut up in small pieces and eaten by Lopati, the chief, his sister and Bambo Manga's daughter. This meat could only be eaten by that inner group.

The men who had skinned the beast cut it up and, following an Ngoni practice, laid all the meat on the gate of the reed fence surrounding the *bwalo*, and carried it to the hut and laid it outside the door. Holding the sacrificial winnowing basket Lopati directed the men to put in it three right ribs, a piece of liver, both stomachs, the heart and lungs, the fat from round the kidneys, a bit of the intestine and the spleen. The head of the beast was arranged facing towards Kabwazi's village, since he had always kraaled some of the Nzunga cattle.

Lopati took the basket into the hut and was followed by the head herd-boy holding the tip of the tail and the gall bladder. The basket with the meat in it was put on the floor at the back of the hut in 'the place of the spirits'. Lopati and the chief squatted on their haunches nearby, and Bambo Manga knelt on her mat while her daughter wiped the soles of her feet, and she went forward on her knees to the place of the spirits. Lopati intervened and said 'Please walk upright', but she refused and said 'I will do as my ancestors did'. Her daughter knelt behind her.

Then Lopati began to praise the spirits, calling on Mputa by name, saying 'Here is your meat. Please eat. We praise you. We are your children.' The rest ejaculated '*Wena Nkosi*', '*Wena, Gumede*' as if supporting him, keeping quite still and facing the place of the spirits. After the invocation Bambo Manga went back to her mat, and Lopati took the gall bladder and sprinkled the juice round her, and then round the meat basket and round the hearth-stones. The gall bladder was then put in a small pot with water in it and laid on the floor, and the tip of the tail was tied above the place of the spirits. The skin of the beast, which had been washed but not scraped, was brought in and laid on the ground between the firestones and the wall and the gate with the meat

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on was placed on it. The meat in the basket and on the gate stayed there all night.

Following the ritual of offering meat to the spirits came the ritual of cooking and eating the meat, both that offered to the spirits and the rest. After the basket of meat had been left all night in the place of the spirits, the large quantity on the gate was carried away and cooked by an old woman outside the hut of Bambo Manga's granddaughter. The meat in the basket which had been offered to the spirits was put in a pot and cooked on the fire in Bambo Manga's hut. It stayed cooking all day and all night till the following morning. Dzinthenga Phungwako, an old and highly respected *lidoda*, came to the hut and divided the sacrificial meat among all who were in the house, that is Bambo Manga, her daughter and granddaughter and several senior women. When they had finished the leading women stood up and thanked '*Zikhomo Maseko*', '*Zikhomo Magwagwa*'. Then they washed their hands and went to their own houses.

The large quantity of meat which had been laid on the gate and cooked on another fire in another *bwalo* was carried in a big pot and put down outside Bambo Manga's hut in the late afternoon. Her daughter came outside and divided the meat into three piles: a small one from the breast-bones for the women, a leg for the chief, the head for Kabwazi the headman of a neighbouring village, and the rest in a big pot for the men. A boy came to tell Lopati that all was ready and he and the chief went out to the place where the beast was killed, near the gate of the kraal. There were four groups already sitting there and the chief and Lopati made a fifth: the *madoda*, the senior men; the *majaha*, the young men; the *mabusa*, the herd-boys; and the little boys. Before Lopati divided the meat he and the chief washed elaborately with water brought in a gourd, and then he washed the knife before cutting the meat. He called the *madoda* to send someone for their portion in a basket, then the young men and the herd-boys were given their portions—a basket for each group, and the small boys had bits put in their hands. The eating was very sedate, there was no snatching of choice bits, and in each group the one who fetched the meat distributed it. There was the general atmosphere of a ritual meal rather than a feast, though the small boys smacked their lips appreciatively. From time to time Lopati called up someone from a group and gave him a bit more to divide up. When it was all eaten, a boy was sent to fetch water and the soapy leaves which the Ngoni used for washing, and the chief and Lopati and the *madoda* all washed the grease off their fingers. Then Lopati stood up and called out '*Siyadumisa baba, zihomo mntwana wenkosi*', 'We are praising you, father, thank you child of the Paramount', and the others all agreed and said '*Zikhomo baba.*' Then they all went together to Bambo Manga's hut and stood opposite her door and called out the same thanks. The women who had eaten their meat

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in three age groups on the verandah also came forward and, led by NaNkoloma, a widow of Njolomole I, thanked in the women's language, *'Zimata, zaithwa mntwana wenkosi.'*

I did not witness any ritual sacrifices in the northern kingdom but the accounts given me by informants corresponded closely with the ritual in Mzikhatha just described. When sacrificing for rain to the spirits of the Paramount, a black ox with no white spot was driven into the kraal in the late afternoon and the chosen spokesman addressed the ancestral spirits of the Jere clan telling them that this was their beast, they must eat the meat and tell UMkulumqango that the people needed rain. While this man prayed to the spirits he stood facing the beast, and everyone else sat looking in front of them and keeping very quiet. The women stayed at home in their huts and the Paramount stayed in his hut 'as if mourning'. When the beast urinated and showed that the spirits had heard, a messenger came and informed the Paramount. The beast was killed early the next morning in the kraal. While the flaying took place, all the huts of the chief wives were smeared with dried cow-dung on the floors and on the smooth place outside the doors. The meat, in two parts, was taken into the *indlunkulu* and left there all night at the back, so that the spirits might lick it. The next morning the meat was cooked in the kraal by the *madoda* and when it was ready they reported to the big *induna*. He called all the people into the kraal and divided them into companies according to their sections and head villages. The meat was given to the head of each head village who divided it among his group. When everyone had finished, one of the leading men stood up and began to praise the spirit using his titles and praise-names (*izitokozo*). The rest stood up and shouted *Bayete*. They then began to dance a war-dance but, the informants added, that was soon stopped by torrents of rain.

These chapters on the Ngoni ancestor cult bring to an end this study of the two Ngoni kingdoms in Nyasaland in the 1930's. We have seen how their distinctiveness as a people depended on the culture which they brought with them from the south and how this culture was found among the families of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans. In the topics included in the three sections of this book: the political system, the social organization, and the ancestor cult, the main features of Ngoni culture are most clearly seen. In much of their economic and agricultural life there was little to distinguish them from their neighbours among the other Nyasaland peoples. The changes brought about by the missions, the schools, new forms of local government, and new types of occupation, were all tending to make the Ngoni less distinctive as a people. The conversion of some leading Ngoni to Christianity, as suggested in Chapter V of Part II, and the spread of schools were together the most powerful influences in altering Ngoni traditional culture. The

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primarily within his mother's household, but also, and especially immediately after weaning, in his grandmother's household. His needs for food and warmth could in fact be met in any of the households which formed part of his father's house and family group. There was no greater contrast for the small boy about the age of seven between this kind of life in the women's compound and his plunge into the life of the boys' dormitory.

The father's role with young children

During day-time in Ngoni villages Ngoni men and women lived almost in two separate worlds, the women in their compounds, the men by the kraal gate or about the village. When important visitors arrived the veranda of the 'big house' became a general meeting-place. Chiefs and leading men who had acquired chairs, among other modern household furniture, preferred to entertain their guests on their own veranda where they had some degree of privacy, and to offer them chairs to sit on instead of the kraal fence to lean against. This use of chairs which they found more comfortable to sit on brought many of the fathers of families back to their own verandas now and then during the day, though they continued to eat their meals with the other men at the kraal gate, and to go there to discuss village affairs and watch over the coming and going of the cattle.

This change of habit brought the fathers of families into closer touch with their young children, and it was accelerated by the growing Christian tradition in which fathers were more closely associated with certain aspects of their children's upbringing. It was the father who arranged for the baptism of the children which took place in the local church and was a ceremony attended by most of the village, whether Christians or not. When an evangelist or a school-teacher conducted evening prayers, as they often did near the kraal where anyone could come after the evening meal, Christian fathers sometimes carried a child in their arms to the prayers.

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

again returning to the old village. That evening they take some of the fire (that they made earlier in the day) to kindle a fire with in the (new) hut (*Kuka*). In kindling it they do not squat down, they blow the faggots into flame from a standing position, and they do this lest the smoke might ever after hang in wreaths over the floor. The womenfolk come every day to cook.

II. When the chief's huts are finished, they build those of the old men, and when these are complete, they bring all the huts [from the old village]. When they see that all the huts are finished, beer is made at the old village, and they go and bring the spirits. He who has a grave pours some beer in a gourd-pot and places it on the grave, saying, "We have gone hence, you must not search for us here, come let us go together." On that day they demolish all the huts that remain, they leave only the huts of which the occupant has lately died. When now the sun begins to slant westward, from the *Kuka* hut they take five gourd-pots, and fill them with beer and make young women carrying these lead the way. The head old woman of the *Kuka* hut goes first, the chief wife of the chief follows *Gogo*, and then come the ones carrying the beer. When they arrive at the new village they set down the gourd-pots and all the people assemble. The elder of the village then begins to propitiate, saying, "There is the beer we down on earth have made, we have gone from yonder, we present to you your new village, all men you will have a care for." Then the village chief makes a present of a goat and hands it to the old man, and he again speaks, saying, "Here is a goat which your child presents, you will wash it down with the beer." If the goat makes water, that is to say the spirit consents, if it will not they do not kill it. Then they kill the goat

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and take the liver, and lungs, and stomach, and set them down beside the beer, and cut off some meat from a fore-leg, and roast it, and cut off a piece, and give the head of the *Kuka* hut, and cut another piece, and the chief eats it, and another his old men eat, and then they begin to cut off bits for their children. The rest of the meat is put in a basket, and next morning is cut up.

III. When the propitiation of the spirits is finished the chief tells his headman, "To-day you must cook some relish, and give it to all the people, and finish the ceremony in connection with the exodus." So he (the headman) sleeps with his wife, and in the morning she takes the relish to give to the chief. All persons of lesser importance come and take theirs from the hut, and any one who is at a distance at the time has his put aside. Now the ceremony is over, and the villagers again resume cohabitation with their wives [broken off since the beginning of the ceremony]. One month passes, and then a great quantity of beer is cooked all over the village, and they have a dance that at the new village the ground may become trampled and hard. When some farther time has elapsed, they cook beer, to demolish the huts of the dead, that were left standing at the old village. At the new village, when a man dies, the first one to do so is buried at the old village; when one of the village elders dies, he is buried at the new settlement, and thereafter all who die are buried there.

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must perish indeed. Give your children the rains, there is the beer we have given you." Then the people begin to clap their hands and sound the *nkulungwani;* they sing, swaying their bodies backwards and forwards, and keep saying, "Pardon, pardon." When they have finished propitiating, they take the beer that remains and dip a cup in and give every one to drink, just a little, no one is short, and even the children are made to sip it. When they have finished they take branches of trees and commence to dance and sing—

"This little cloud, and this,
This little cloud, and this,
Let the rains come with this little cloud.
Give us water,
Our hearts are dry,
Krōle.
Give us water,
Our hearts are dry,
Krōle."

When they come to the village they find an old woman has drawn water in readiness, and put it at the doorway, and the people begin to dip in their branches and wave them aloft, scattering the drops, and then they see the rain come in heavy storm-clouds.

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X

THE LOTS

753 791 I. If a man be ill, his companion goes off and seeks the oracle man. He comes outside his hut and hails him, "Zikomo." The owner says, "Yes, come in here." And the man enters the hut, and says, "We have come to you that you may trace a spirit for us." Then the man takes out his lots from a little cat's-skin bag, and takes some ashes and rubs the lots with them, and begins to consult them, and says, "Are you nursing some sick person?" And he replies, "Yes, indeed, I have been attending on a sick person; the little thing that is ill is a child, and I cannot get sleep for him (lit. with him), and he will not even eat gruel, and I said, 'But I must go to the oracle man; perhaps there he may follow up for me the spirit which is causing the child to be ill.'" Then he begins to consult the lots, and says, "It is the spirit of the child's grandmother; it is she who is causing the child to be ill." And he who has come to consult the lots replies, "I have heard." And the lots again speak (through the man): "Why do you not keep me in mind, and even my grandchild, you also go without calling me to mind," but if you give the spirit a fowl take it from me, the child is sitting up; when you go and take the fowl, kneel down with it, and say, "Grandmother, there is the fowl on account of which you are taking a life" (*muntu*). Then the man who has come from the road (to consult the lots) says, "Put the spirit of mine back in the bag."

782 755 II. Then he goes home, and takes his fowl, and kneels down with it, and takes a gourd-cup of water,

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and fills his mouth, and blows the water out in a spray, and says, "Grandmother, there is the fowl for which you are causing a person to be ill; you harden your heart all for the sake of a fowl; go, let your little child alone, that he also shall walk about like his companions do; you must not see fit to take a man, only for the sake of a fowl." Then he takes the fowl and kills it, and plucks it, and cleans it; he roasts the liver, and places it at that side of the hut where his head is towards when he sleeps. When the fowl is cooked, he makes some porridge and dishes it out in little baskets, leaving some in the pot, and commences the propitiation of the spirit, saying, "Here is the fowl we have killed for you; eat of it together, let there not be one who refuses. And there is your portion also, little children; you must eat together and rejoice." And he takes the pot, and says, "And this is yours, old women." And when he has finished propitiating, he takes the porridge and puts it at "the head" of the hut, so that he can eat what is left on the morrow, and then he begins to divide out the food to the people, saying, "You, there is your portion; and you, also, there is yours, and this is yours, old women." And when they have finished eating they clap their hands and sound the *ntungululu*, and then disperse. Next morning, at dawn, they take what they had put at the head, and eat it.

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between their legs, and begins one by one, and tells him, "You, you will let three days elapse, the fourth you will die;" and tells another, "You will let four days pass, and on the fifth you die." All of them he speaks to thus. Then he takes some medicine and scatters it, and they rise and begin to run off, and the witch-finder also runs away. At the village, when they have slept three days, they hear so and so is dead, and when four days have gone they hear so and so is dead.

XIII

AN ANGONI PRAYER FOR RAIN

I. When rain does not come, they go to the man with the lots to consult them. He of the lots says, "It is the great spirit; it is she who is keeping the rain from coming." Then all the elders assemble. In the morning at dawn, an ox is taken from the kraal, and the chief stands up and says, "This ox I have given you, our ancestor, seeing that you are keeping the rain from us; give us, your children, rain; look, all men are afflicted because of you." And the elders utter a response, saying, "Hail, chief, spare us, help us, thy people." And when they are answering (thus) the ox makes water, and then people know the spirit has heard. Should it not make water, they say the spirit refused (to do as asked), and leave the ox, and go again to consult the lots. And they kill the ox, and cut off its tail, and put it in a basket, and take also the liver, and put in the basket, and these they go off to the *Kuka*

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

789 hut with, and set it (the basket) down at "the
787 head" against the wall, and say, "There is the ox we have killed for you." Then they bring all the meat and put it in the *Kuka* hut. In the morning the elders rise early to cut it up; every one eats of it.

XIV

THE FUNERAL OF AN NSUTU

766 I. When the chief of the *Asutu* dies, people are not told at first; they hide the fact from them lest his attendants run away. On the day on which they make it known, they seize beforehand youths and maidens, and then every one is told that the chief has died. Then every one assembles and goes to the grave, and they dig and dig a very large "village" (cave) in the grave. When they have dug this cavity, they take the youths and maidens and shave their heads and rub them with oil, streaming down, and red clay. The youths have already their bows in their hands, as if going to the dance, though they are going to die. Then they lift the corpse and make the youths go in first, and the corpse follows. When they come to the cross-ways,
766 they take one of the young men, and sharpening
782 a bamboo, hammer it down through his head with a stone, and the stake grips (lit. bites) the ground. He is sitting upright as if alive, and he is made to hold a bow in his hand. When they come to the grave, they commence to break the legs of the others, and pour the juice of chilies over their heads. (And the reason they do this is because they fear

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

their relations may dig them out, and place them in some other country.) And they throw them to the back of the cave, and take the corpse and lay it on top of them. Then they begin to fill in, the ones in the cave are groaning, "Alas, alas!" When they have finished filling in, they go to the water to bathe. When they return to the village they dance.

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XV

THE CHIEF OF THE KUKA AND THE SON-IN-LAW

I. The chief of the *Kuka* hut and his son-in-law once hoed a garden. When the maize grew up, the father-in-law told his son-in-law to build a watch-tower. Then the father-in-law went off and forged some arrow-heads, and gave them to his son-in-law, saying, "There are some arrows, you must keep a look-out with them in the garden here." And the son-in-law received the arrows, and remained at the watch-tower there. One day the wind came and flattened down all the maize, and his father-in-law came to walk on a round of inspection in the garden, and then he saw that the wind had laid the maize, and he clapped his hands and said, "Oh, to-day I see wonders, those arrow-heads I just forged for him to keep by him [and look at]." And then he went up to the watch-tower, where his son-in-law was, and asked him, saying, "Those arrow-heads I forged, I just forged that you might sleep with them on the watch-tower here?" And the son-

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6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

XXVI

THE KANONOMERA DANCE

If a person is ill, they go and consult the lots, and then he of the lots says, "It is the spirit of his grandmother, it is wanting a dance; when you dance that dance, you can take it from us the child is sitting up." And they go to the village and take a basket of grain, and with it they address the spirit, saying, "There is the grain for which you are killing a person; when we have made beer, let us see the person (who is ill) sitting up." And then they assemble every one, and the day the beer is strained, they all come together, and that evening they enter the hut (where the sick person is), and begin to clap their hands to rouse the spirit, and then they see the sick one is trembling and crying out, and then the people say (to the spirit), "You must not come with war, it is we who have called you; see here at the village the drums have come, but let them depart again without anything happening to mar the dance." And when they have finished clapping their hands the dance comes forth, and the drums begin to sound, and they are dancing. He who remembers a song sings it; when one is possessed by a spirit, down he falls, and they drag him out of the dance, and deck him with calico and skins of animals, and he again enters the circle and dances. When a person is possessed by a child's spirit, they bind his calico tightly round him that it be strong, because that person is wishing to strip it off, and dance naked, as a child does not wear anything. Should a woman be seized by a man's spirit, saying, "I am so and so," they deck her with a

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

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feather head-dress, and in her hand she holds a little stick (for a spear), and her calico is tied round her waist, and her breasts swing free. The songs they sing at the Kanonomera dance go thus—

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What knocks off the dew,
Comes at the early dawn.—(*Repeat.*)

Looking, gazing, we just gaze one at the other.
(*Repeat.*)

When the drum sounds it is the *choinjoli* drum
that brings the spirit.—(*Repeat.*)

Far away there, far away,
Far away there, far away,
Far away where shines white that little cloud,
Far away there, is my bow.

Little quail, little quail, you are picking up the
little grains.
And what if he is,
Are they not his eyes?
It broke his leg for him;
Only hunger, only hunger.

Oh no, indeed, indeed,
Two wives have been too many for him indeed;
Two wives have been too many for him indeed.

You hate me,
You hate me for my being so old.—(*Repeat.*)

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5

portant chiefs. The Paramounts have told me that occasionally at their biannual 'meeting of chiefs' and *indunas*, some recital of history is made, especially if they want to quote a precedent or examine an old custom with a view to change. This historical tradition therefore is alive and has a recognized function in regulating Ngoni life. In one area part of it has been written in the vernacular and is used as a school history book.[1] In the other areas the Paramounts have spoken of the need for something of the same kind, as they recognize that with the coming of modern education it is an effective way of training the young in the traditions of the Ngoni past.

In addition to recitals of tradition by 'historians' there are many other reminders of the Ngoni past which are constantly before the people. An adequate examination of Ngoni history as it is expressed in their institutions and standardized behaviour would need an article to itself. I shall only mention here some ways and occasions through which tradition and old Ngoni institutions are brought before the people.

1. The praise songs of chiefs, war songs, regimental songs, names of famous regiments, and prayers for rain. These contain references, often rather obscure, to events and persons in the past. The praise songs are sung, or rather shouted, on special occasions, as when thanking the chief for beer, by members of important clans who alone know the words. The war songs and regimental songs recall the great days of conquest, and are sung and danced in war dress at big gatherings at the Paramount's village or at other chief's villages. The prayers for rain invoke the names of great chiefs in old days, but are now only a memory as they are no longer used in ceremonies—at least in none that I have found so far.

2. The names of prominent landmarks, such as hills and rivers where great chiefs built their villages and fights took place. Herd boys will point out a river and say, 'That is where Mtwalo built when he came from Choma', or 'That hill is where Singu hid in the Azungu war'. The historical events attached to these places are widely known and constantly before people's eyes in the diversified landscape of hills and valleys.

3. Important village names. During the trek north, the names of

[1] In Mwambera's country.

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890) 1901
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their anger and propitiate them. Yet this recognition is not made 769
in any degree of affection but in the times of dark necessity. [87]
When the rain has not fallen, when locusts swarm and eat up [825]
their crops, when sickness and death are abroad in the village, the [753]
spirits are working out their vengeance for being neglected. Then
they are remembered and sacrifice is made. There are also 782
certain ceremonial observances on important occasions. Before [241]
the gardens are hoed, and when the reaping time draws near; if [926]
an army is going out to battle, or when a coronation takes place, [243]
then prayer is made. The confusion of the old and new ideas [177]
was amusingly illustrated at the last coronation ceremony, when
Mperembe, the eldest sub-chief, sacrificed a bull, and offering it to
the spirit of the dead chief prayed him to bless the new chief, then
added, "and, O Mombera, bless the teachers when they go about
teaching the people the words of God." There was something
very beautiful in this recognition of Christianity as but a fuller
shining of the dim light they had.

Their old men are full of stories and traditions, some of them 538
are uncommonly like the stories of Uncle Remus, and others
with a curious echo of Old Testament story. There is a hill near
Ekwendeni, where tradition says a great tower was built by the
Tumbuka to reach into the moon. But the white ants ate away 539
the foundation and the tower fell and the people were killed. I
passed below this hill when I was on my way home, and chaffed
my carriers on trying to build so great a tower with wood. They
laughed, and said, "But do you know the story of the hill over
there?" pointing to the north. No, I said, what is it? And they
told me how that long ago the Tumbuka found the country too narrow,
so they decided to climb into heaven and cultivate new gardens there.
So they gathered the nation together and cut down all the trees,
and began to build a huge tower on this hill. When they had
got a great way up, some cried "Stop, we need build no more.
Here is a ladder coming down out of heaven." And they looked
up and saw great roots hanging down. So the people caught
hold of these roots and began climbing hand over hand up to
heaven. But suddenly while they were all climbing, the roots
broke, and the nation fell to the earth and was snuffed out.

Like other children of nature there are men and women in the 787
tribe who seem to have a wonderful gift of second sight. Forty [177]
years ago a regiment went out on a great raid. The witch doctor
in blessing them told them that they would meet a white man